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BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca Issue: 09-06 February 13th, 2009

- **Exports slip in December but manage to climb 5.0% during 2008**
- **Cost of new housing continues to fall**
- **One quarter of BC households consume mostly bottled water**

The Economy

- **BC product exports dropped 14.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, as shipments to the US (-11.7%) declined for the second straight month and exports to overseas destinations plummeted (-17.8%).** Energy product exports to the US (-15.1%) and other countries (-22.7%) plunged, accounting for much of the overall decline. US-bound forest product exports were also off substantially (-18.9%) in December, as were exports of most other types of commodities.

  Canadian exports slipped 9.7% to $35.3 billion. Shipments to the US retreated 10.0%, with even stronger declines in exports to Japan (-13.3%). A notable increase in shipments to the European Union (+18.3%) was unable to offset the declines.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **New motor vehicle sales in BC ended the year on a low note, retreating (-20.7% *seasonally adjusted*) for third consecutive month in December.** Sales were down in all provinces, resulting in a 14.8% decrease at the national level. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Relative to the same month of 2007, the cost of new housing in BC's largest city continued to fall in December.** Home builders in Vancouver received 2.3% less for their projects, while Victoria's housing price index was also down (-2.9%). Declining housing prices (-4.5%) in the capital city pulled prices down as land values remained comparatively stable (+0.1%). A similar picture was painted in Vancouver, where an increase in the price of land in Vancouver (+0.9%) was offset by a downturn in the cost for housing (-4.4%).

  Nationally, the new housing price index inched up 0.4% during the twelve-month period ending in December.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **As of March 31, 2007, British Columbia's general government (provincial and local) net financial debt was $13.1 billion ($3,062 per capita), down 18.3% from the same time in 2006.** Overall, the net financial debt of provincial and territorial general governments was $242 billion ($7,387 per capita), a 4.0% decrease from 2006, and a 18-year low at 16.5% of total gross domestic product. Alberta, with a net financial debt of -$34.9 billion, along with Yukon (-$381 million) and Northwest Territories (-$185 million) were the only provincial and territorial governments where the value of assets exceeded that of liabilities. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

> *Note to Readers*
>
> *These debt figures are derived from the Financial Management System and differ from information presented in the Public Accounts. The data have been adjusted to ensure comparability across provinces, and use a definition of provincial and territorial general government which includes all activities of government whether they are performed by ministries or by "arm's length" agencies (such as the Workers' Compensation Board).*

2008 in Review

- **BC product exports increased 5.0% during 2008, climbing to $33.1 billion.** Rising prices pushed shipments of energy (+55.3%) products up most notably, although exports were

Report

A Summary of the Federal Immigration Plan for 2008

Did you know...
64% of British Columbians intend to "spice things up" for their lovers this Valentine's Day.
Source: Ipsos Canada

also higher among agriculture & fish (+4.1%) and industrial (+5.5%) goods. Conversely, exports of forestry (-17.9%) and machinery & equipment (-6.0%) lost ground last year. Ontario (-7.8%) was the only province to see exports decline, while Saskatchewan (+61.2%) and Alberta (+33.2%) posted the strongest growth.

Canadian exports rose 7.2%, despite lower international shipments of forestry (-11.1%) and auto (-21.9%) products. The nation's exports to most destinations were up, including those to the US (+6.0%), Mexico (+19.8%), Japan (+21.8%) and the European Union (+7.6%). Shipments to India soared 35.5% (to $2.3 billion) in 2008 and exports to China jumped 10.9% (to nearly $10 billion).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **A total of 182,115 new cars, trucks and vans were driven off BC car lots last year, 9.7% fewer than in 2007 (*data for BC also includes the territories*).** Sales of North American-made passenger cars fell (-7.5%) for the sixth year in a row, but cars manufactured overseas (+0.9%) continued to enjoy a resurgence. Truck sales plummeted 14.9% (including those made in North America as well as overseas) the largest recorded decrease in over 30 years.

  Despite recent slips, North American-made cars continue to dominate the market, with sales remaining higher (56% of passenger car sales) than for cars made outside North America. North American automakers also have a stranglehold on the market for trucks and vans, accounting for 86% of total sales. Despite high gas prices, new trucks and vans were just slightly less popular with consumers than cars. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Air Travel

- **In 2007, the major Canadian air carriers (West Jet and Air Canada) reported a 6.4% increase in passenger volume compared to 2006.** Both carriers also noted improvements in their passenger loads (a measure of the fullness of the aircraft) with capacity rates hovering around 80%. Growth in the number of passengers travelling domestically led the increases in scheduled travel in 2007, jumping 8.0% during the 12-month period, while the international sector posted a rise of 3.9%.

  The average domestic and international air fare (all types) paid by passengers was $252.00 in 2006, 0.3% higher than in 2005. That same year, nearly all (97%) of passengers on domestic and international scheduled services flew on discount fares, up 0.5 percentage points from 2005.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

Water

- **One in four (24%) British Columbian households primarily drank bottled water rather than tap water in 2007.** This percentage was significantly lower than the Canadian average (30%). In fact, among the provinces, BC recorded one of the highest proportions of households who drank only tap water (67%) last year, second only to PEI (72%). Bottled water was most popular in Ontario (34%) and Manitoba (37%). BC's largest metropolitan areas differed slightly in their water consumption habits, with more Victoria residents getting their drinking water from the tap than Vancouverites.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The proportion of British Columbian households that use water conservation devices has been on the rise over the past decade, but the province continues to fall short of the Canadian average.** Well over half (57%) of BC households reported having a water-saving showerhead in their homes last year, substantially lower than the national average (62%). Similarly, 35% of BC homes used a water-saving toilet in 2007, four percentage points below the proportion reached for the nation as a whole (39%). In 2007, households in Ontario (65%) were the most likely to use a water-saving shower head, while those in both Ontario and Alberta (each 47%) were the most likely to have a water-saving toilet. However, British Columbians are most likely to turn off the water while brushing their teeth. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

Infoline Report

Contact: Jacob Dwhytie & Ocan Fan Lu
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Originally published in
Immigration Highlights Issue 2008-3

A Summary of the Federal Immigration Plan for 2008

Each year, as required under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) details the immigration situation over the past year, and announces next year's planning levels in its *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*. This report covers a number of subjects including targets for admissions of new permanent residents by immigration class; information on the past year's target achievements; and policy changes and initiatives.

Recently, a number of policy changes and initiatives have occurred that are designed to help Canada meet its three broad immigration policy aims: family reunification, economic development, and humanitarian concern. This article examines immigrant landings over the past year and the 2009 planning levels for the three main immigrant classes, followed by a brief summary of some important policy changes at the federal and provincial levels. Unless otherwise stated, data in this article is from the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2008* from CIC.

General Review

Table 1 presents information on the 2007, 2008, and 2009 planning levels and actual admissions. The number of permanent resident admissions in 2007 was slightly below overall planning levels; 236,758 individuals were admitted to Canada, compared with a target range of 240,000 to 265,000. However, as the annual report explains, 250,000 visas were issued to successful applicants in 2007, and CIC does not control when individuals decide to travel to Canada.

Through the first half of 2008, 122,387 new permanent residents arrived, well ahead of the 109,527 recorded through the same period of 2007, as reported in the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2007*.

British Columbia attracted 16.4 percent of Canada's new permanent residents in 2007, positioning it behind Ontario (47.0 percent) and Quebec (19.1 percent). In the first two quarters of 2008, B.C. reported a 17.7 percent share of the Canadian total.

The target ranges for total new permanent residents in 2009 are the same as 2007 and 2008, but the distribution among classes and categories has changed slightly.

Economic Class

The Economic Class includes Skilled Workers, Business Immigrants, Live-in Caregivers, Provincial/Territorial Nominees, and the new Canadian Experience Class. Together, these categories have historically accounted for the largest share of landings to Canada and B.C. In 2007, the number of Economic Class landings fell short of planning levels. The planning range was set at 141,000 to 158,000, but only 131,248 individuals immigrated. At the national level, this shortfall was due to fewer Skilled Worker landings; all other categories met or exceeded planning levels.

Within the Economic Class, B.C. was the top destination province for immigrants in the business category, attracting 44.8 percent of all business immigrants to Canada in 2007, and 55.9 percent so far in 2008.

Looking forward to 2009, the target for this class as a whole is expected to remain steady near the 2007 and 2008 levels, but the distribution among the categories has shifted somewhat. The Skilled Worker category has been reduced from 2007 levels to

reflect the growth in the Provincial Nominee Program, and the addition of the Canadian Experience Class.

Family Class

The primary role of the Family Class is reunification of partners, children, and parents. Under this class, 66,230 new permanent residents arrived in Canada in 2007, just below the planned 67,000 to 69,000. In total, this class represented 28.0 percent of all landings in 2007. Through the first two quarters of 2008, 31,476 individuals entered through this class.

In 2007, 32.4 percent of new permanent residents to B.C. arrived under the Family Class, while 26.7 percent of entrants to the province between January and June 2008 have been in this class. The 2009 goals are unchanged from 2008, so similar levels for B.C. should be expected.

Protected Persons and Other Classes

The Protected Persons and Other Classes include refugees and entrants on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Targets under these classes have remained relatively steady over the past three planning reports.

In 2007, 39,280 new permanent residents landed in Canada under these classes. Of these landings, 7.5 percent went to B.C. As of June 30th, 16,500 of these immigrant classes had landed in Canada so far in 2008; 1,311 of these came to B.C.

Table 1: Permanent Residents plan and Actual Admissions 2007 to 2009

	Canada 2007 Plan	Number Admitted 2007		Canada 2008 Plan	Number Admitted Jan-June 2008		Canada 2009 Plan
		Canada	BC		Canada	BC	
Economic Class							
Skilled Workers†	116,000 to 128,000	97,857	14,781	92,000 to 98,000	53,015	8,441	96,300 to 101,100
Business Immigrants	9,000 to 11,000	10,179	4,557	11,000 to 13,000	5,646	3,155	11,000 to 12,000
Live-in Caregivers	3,000 to 5,000	6,117	1,519	6,000 to 9,000	4,775	1,077	8,000 to 10,000
Provincial/Territorial Nominees	13,000 to 14,000	17,095	2,519	20,000 to 22,000	10,975	1,932	20,000 to 26,000
Canadian Experience Class‡	—	—	—	10,000 to 12,000	—	—	5,000 to 7,500
Total Economic Class (including Dependents)	**141,000 to 158,000**	**131,248**	**23,376**	**139,000 to 154,000**	**74,411**	**14,805**	**140,300 to 156,600**
Family Class							
Spouses, Partners, Children	49,000 to 50,000	50,416	9,314	50,000 to 52,000	23,404	3,929	50,000 to 52,000
Parents and Grandparents	18,000 to 19,000	15,814	3,297	18,000 to 19,000	8,072	1,862	18,000 to 19,000
Total Family Class	**67,000 to 69,000**	**66,230**	**12,611**	**68,000 to 71,000**	**31,476**	**5,791**	**68,000 to 71,000**
Protected Persons and Other Classes*	**32,000 to 38,000**	**39,280**	**2,954**	**33,000 to 40,000**	**16,500**	**1,311**	**31,700 to 37,400**
Total	**240,000 to 265,000**	**236,758**	**38,941**	**240,000 to 265,000**	**122,387**	**21,707**	**240,000 to 265,000**

Sources: Citizenship and immigration Canada: *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2008. 2008 Jan-June for BC from the Landed Immigrant Data System, 2008 Q3*

† Skilled Workers includes Federal Skilled Workers and Quebec Skilled Workers.

‡ Canadian Experience Class was launched in September 2008. The start was delayed, resulting in a reduction of planning levels for 2009.

* Protected Persons includes Government-assisted Refugees, Privately Sponsored Refugees, Protected Persons in Canada, Dependents Abroad, landings under Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds / Public Policy, and Category Not Stated

The Canada level planning range for this class was set at 31,700 to 37,400 individuals for 2009, which is slightly below the 2007 and 2008 targets.

Summary of Recent Policy Changes

A number of administration and policy changes have occurred recently. Below is a brief summary of those anticipated to have the most significant impact on permanent resident landings in B.C.[1]

First, amendments to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) have been made to eliminate the obligation to process all applications and to give the government the ability to set processing priorities through ministerial instructions. These changes are in response to a large backlog of immigration applications. The backlog is especially an issue in the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP). With more applications received each year than can be processed, this backlog means that successful applicants and employers may wait years after submitting an application before being admitted.

All applications received prior to February 27, 2008 will continue to be processed as before. However, new applications are subject to the ministerial instructions. The first set of ministerial instructions apply primarily to applications in the Economic Class. Family, Refugee, and Protected Persons Classes will continue to be processed as before.

The ministerial instructions specify eligible FSWP applications as those which[2]:

- include an offer of arranged employment; or
- are from a foreign national living legally in Canada for one year as a temporary foreign worker or international student; or
- are from a skilled worker who has at least one year of experience under one or more of the 38 occupations listed at www.cic.gc.ca/eligible

Applications deemed ineligible for processing are returned to the applicant along with the processing fee.

Also, a new category of immigrant in the Economic Class has been created: the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). Due in part to the backlog in FSWP applications, requests for entry into Canada under Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) have grown. The CEC is designed to open a new route to permanent residency for individuals who have already spent time in the Canadian economy (e.g. in the TFWP), and includes greater flexibility to accommodate workers in skilled trades. The CEC will be available to individuals who have at least two years of skilled work experience in Canada, and to graduates who spend at least two years at a Canadian post-secondary institution, with at least one year of skilled work experience in-country.

In addition to these changes, the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is planned to increase its role in attracting immigrants both to invest in businesses in Canada, and as skilled workers in strategic occupations. Business immigrants in the B.C. PNP face requirements to invest a minimum amount in the province, and create a minimum number of jobs for Canadians and permanent residents. Skilled immigrants in the B.C. PNP are recruited for their knowledge in specific occupations deemed strategically important by the provincial government.

[1] More details on all of these issues can be found at www.cic.gc.ca and www.welcomebc.ca

[2] Ministerial instructions retrieved 12/15/08 from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/DEPARTMENT/media/backgrounders/2008/2008-11-28.asp

The B.C. Ministry of Economic Development forecast in the 2008 B.C. Budget Service Plan that 1,730 immigrants would enter the province through the two streams of the PNP for the 2007/08 fiscal year[3], most of whom were admitted for their skills in a strategic occupation. The government's plan is to increase the levels in both categories to attract 7,000 new skilled immigrants and 280 business immigrants during the 2010/11 fiscal year.

The aim of all of these programs is to increase the ability of Canada and British Columbia to attract immigrants with in-demand knowledge and skills, while maintaining the capacity to respond to future changes in labour market conditions in a timely manner.

[3] The B.C. fiscal year begins April 1st and ends March 31st

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Telephone: _____

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Method of Payment:

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(Payable to the Receiver General of Canada)

Visa____ M/C____ Amex_____

Amount $ (including GST): _____

Cardholder: _____

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FT

FEES:

Early Bird Rate: $199 per person
+ 5% GST ($9.95) = $208.95
(for registrations received by Monday February 2, 2009)

Regular Rate: $249 per person
+ 5% GST ($12.45) = $261.45

Registration fees include continental breakfast, a lunch buffet, and refreshments.

Cancellation policy: Substitutes are permitted; however, no refunds will be given for cancellations.

Please send your completed registration form by one of the following ways:

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EMAIL:
registrar@diversitymattersconference.ca

MAIL: Registrar,
Statistics Canada,
Suite 600, 300 West Georgia Street,
Vancouver, BC, V6B 6C7

PHONE: in Vancouver 604-666-1851
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Diversity Matters

Statistics Canada and our conference partners* would like to welcome you to **Diversity Matters**, a one-day conference featuring a panel of experts who will present on the changes, trends and implications of ethno-cultural diversity and immigration at the national, provincial and regional levels.

The conference also includes panel discussions, Q & As, information booths and demonstrations on how to access the wealth of free information available on Statistics Canada's website: www.statcan.gc.ca.

** Conference partners include BC Stats, WelcomeBC, the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program and Multiculturalism Program.*

Why is the conference important?

Good statistics are the foundation of a well-functioning country. They allow businesses, non-profit organizations as well as individual Canadians to make informed decisions, and government of all levels to develop appropriate policies.

Our panel of experts will draw from a wide array of data sources to bring you up-to-date on important information such as:

- 2006 Census highlights on immigration, language, ethnic origin and visible minorities
- Profiles of main ethnic communities
- The changing diversity composition of the population across sub-provincial regions within BC
- Implications of diversity and future projections
- Social, economic and labour market integration of immigrants
- Attracting immigrants to smaller centres

CONFERENCE PARTNERS:

BC Stats
Welcome BC

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS:

Keynote Speaker:

The Honourable Wally Oppal,
B.C. Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism

Presenters:

Anil Arora, Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Institutions and Labour Statistics Field, Statistics Canada

Tina Chui, Chief, Ethnocultural and Immigration Section, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada

David O'Neil, Director, Population Statistics, BC Stats

Andrew Ramlo, Director, Urban Futures

Professor Dan Hiebert, Co-Director, Metropolis BC, Center of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity

Jean McRae, Executive Director, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria

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Email transmission information service from BC Stats

also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/08	% change on one year ago
BC	4,405.5	1.6
Canada	33,441.3	1.2
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 6)		
(BC - at market prices)	2007	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	192,528	5.4
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	164,583	3.0
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)*	38,184	1.4
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	25,282	3.1
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Nov	3,278	-3.6
Merchandise Exports - Dec	2,453	-14.8
Retail Sales - Nov	4,543	-3.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on	12-month avg
(all items - Dec 2008)	one year ago	% change
BC	1.2	2.1
Vancouver	1.3	2.4
Victoria	1.2	1.8
Canada	1.2	2.3
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan '09	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,415	-0.7
Employed - BC	2,268	-1.5
Unemployed - BC	148	13.7
		Dec '08
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	6.1	5.3
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.2	6.6
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Feb 11/09	Feb 13/08
Prime Business Rate	3.00	5.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.00	7.35
- 5 year	5.79	7.39
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Feb 11/09	Feb 13/08
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.2424	0.9995
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.8046	1.0030
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan '09	one year ago
BC	799.72	3.6
Canada	804.02	4.4

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

2008 Municipal Population

New and historical estimates include revisions based on final net census undercoverage information from Statistics Canada.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/estspop.asp#totpop

2008 Building Permits

Preliminary December figures allow us to publish preliminary annual totals.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/econ_stat.asp#otherstat

Provincial Electoral District Profiles

Our series of profiles for each of the 85 electoral districts that will be contested in the provincial general election scheduled for May 12, 2009. Based on the 2006 Census; 27 pages each.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/peds/ped_06.asp

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www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/rss/rss.asp

The Import Content of Exports: A British Columbia Perspective

A new study examining the import content of British Columbia's exports has been released. The removal of the import content allows for better comparison with GDP and provides insights into the value-added content of exports and the extent that firms are outsourcing production in an attempt to lower costs.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/trade.asp#ICE

Released this week by BC Stats

- Exports, December 2008
- Tourism Sector Monitor, January 2009

Next week

- Consumer Price Index, January 2009

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